

# TRUST MATTERS

Department of the Interior • Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Volume 12/Issue 3 Summer 2012



## Who Ya Gonna Call? TBCC! *One Million Calls and Counting*

The Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC) answered its **one millionth call** on May 17, 2012. TBCC opened its phone lines December 3, 2004.

Ninety-seven percent of callers have their questions answered during the call. This is referred to as *first line resolution*. The remaining issues are escalated to OST staff. Those items are tracked by TBCC for follow up to ensure callers get the information requested.

The well trained and patient personnel who answer the phones await your questions. Call TBCC, toll free, at 1-888-678-6836 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, Mountain time.

### Table of Contents

Pay.gov	1
AIRR on "Native Report"	1
Who Ya Gonna Call? TBCC	1
Secretarial Commission	2
Commissioners on "Native America Calling"	2
OST Efficiency Study	3
Records Conference	3
ONRR and OST	4
To OHTA's Credit	4

## Pay.gov: A Popular Option

Pay.gov® has been accepting payments for Bureau of Indian Affairs leases and permits since the end of August 2011. The total of payments received during the first three quarters of fiscal year 2012 via Pay.gov® has exceeded four million dollars.

Payments can be made by electronic check (funds transferred directly from a bank account) or by credit card through this Internet based collection service of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. To date, the amount of funds received using the electronic check option have exceeded the credit card option by about five times. Credit card payments must be less than \$50,000. There is no limit on the funds transferred directly from a bank account.

About one percent of the total income for leases and permits is being received through Pay.gov®. Its use is expected to increase as this service becomes more familiar to payees.

Questions about Pay.gov® may be sent to Rien Heymering at 505-816-1323 or email [rien\\_hymering@ost.doi.gov](mailto:rien_hymering@ost.doi.gov).



## Native Report Plans Episode about AIRR

A segment about the American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) is being planned as part of the eighth season of *Native Report*, a television series produced by WDSE, a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) station in Duluth, Minnesota. Footage and interviews were done in June 2012 for an air date in early 2013. The show's producer and writer, Mike LeGarde, led the production crew that visited the AIRR facility in Lenexa, Kansas. Interviews were conducted by Tadd Johnson, the show's co-host and co-producer.

Previously, the first two episodes of the sixth season of *Native Report* included content about the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). The episodes aired early in 2011. They can be viewed online at [www.wdse.org/shows/native/watch/season-6](http://www.wdse.org/shows/native/watch/season-6).

*Native Report* celebrates Native American culture and heritage and feature interviews with some of the most powerful and influential leaders of Indian country. The series can be viewed on PBS stations. Check with your local PBS affiliate about when *Native Report* airs in your area. Recent and past episodes are also available online at [www.wdse.org/shows/native](http://www.wdse.org/shows/native).

## Secretarial Commission Seeks Employees' Input

The Secretarial Commission on Indian Trust Administration and Reform met in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 11-12, 2012, at the workplace of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). The location provided the five Commissioners an opportunity to meet OST employees in person, to participate in a tour of the offices and to get a close look at several core functions performed by OST.

After the June meeting, the Commissioners extended a special request to employees with OST, the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and several other offices in the Department to provide suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the Department's management and administration of its trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives. As the Department's specialists in trust management, the Commissioners believe this input is of particular interest. The employees were asked to complete a five-question survey with the same questions the Commission posed to federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations. These responses join that of tribal leaders, individual Indians and tribal organizations in guiding the Commission's work.

The June meeting of the Commission was attended by Forrest J. Gerard and Ross O. Swimmer, each a former Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs. Also attending were several leaders from Indian country, and representatives from the Indian Land Working Group, Native American Rights Fund, Great Plains Chairman's Association, Intertribal Monitoring Association, American Indian Graduate Center and individual Indian land owners. Commissioner Stacy Leeds characterized the meeting as intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking, a tone set by the introduction of bold, sweeping thoughts and provocative questions from those attending. Minutes and summaries of each meeting are posted on the Internet at [www.interior.gov/cobell/commission/index.cfm](http://www.interior.gov/cobell/commission/index.cfm).

The tour of OST helped the Commissioners gain a first-hand understanding of OST's work for and outreach to Indian trust beneficiaries. It gave them personal insights to add to the information they have been receiving since their first meeting in March. The tour was conducted by acting Principal Deputy Special Trustee Michele F. Singer and Associate Principal Deputy Special Trustee Donna Erwin. In addition to all five Commissioners, participants on the tour included Designated Federal Official Lizzie Marsters, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and personnel from the Department's Office of the Solicitor and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Bismarck, North Dakota, September 13-14. A second public webinar was held on August 13. For more information about the Commission's work, visit [www.doi.gov/cobell/commission/index.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/cobell/commission/index.cfm).

## Commissioners Participate on *Native America Calling*

On June 13, several members of the Secretarial Commission on Indian Trust Administration and Reform were guests on *Native America Calling*, a weekday, live call-in program linking public radio stations, the Internet and listeners in a thought-provoking national conversation about issues specific to Native communities. Chair of the Commission Fawn Sharp (Quinault), Commission members Dr. Peterson Zah (Navajo Nation) and Tex G. Hall (Three Affiliated Tribes), and Lizzie Marsters, the Commission's Designated Federal Officer, who is Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior, participated live on *Native America Calling*. They provided a summary of the Commission's June 11-12, 2012, meeting and outlined its objectives.

During the program, the Commissioners shared their sincere desire to engage youth in the Commission's comprehensive evaluation of Interior's management of the Indian trust. Their plans include efforts to reach out to American Indian youth organizations to keep young people informed and engaged in the Commission's work.

Visit the *Native America Calling* archives at [www.nativeamericacalling.com/nac\\_past2007a.shtml](http://www.nativeamericacalling.com/nac_past2007a.shtml), to listen to the program. For information about the Commission, visit [www.doi.gov/cobell/commission](http://www.doi.gov/cobell/commission).



Right: Commission meeting June 11-12, 2012

## OST Efficiency Study Results Received

The *Examination, Evaluation, and Recommendation Analysis of the Department of the Interior's Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Study* (Efficiency Study) conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. was recently delivered to the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). Acting Principal Deputy Special Trustee Michele F. Singer shared the results with the Secretary of the Interior's management team, all OST employees and Congressional staffers.

Personnel in all OST offices were asked to review the study and its recommendations and provide feedback to the acting PDST. Next steps involve developing plans to implement short-term and "quick win" recommendations, followed by strategies to implement medium and long-term recommendations.



A key recommendation of the study addressed the need for improved *internal* communication. With the assistance of the Department of the Interior's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution and OST's ombudsman, the acting PDST held the first of a series of learning sessions with senior managers. The meeting took place in Albuquerque and included specialized communication training. Additional meetings are planned in both Washington, D.C. and Albuquerque.

The study also suggested that OST "establish a formal strategic plan and planning process to continually define objectives, communicate resulting goals to internal and external stakeholders, and track performance against objectives." A small team of several OST employees are developing a strategic plan. The plan also will serve as a communication tool for everyone in the organization who interacts with beneficiaries and the public.

For more information about the Efficiency Study, contact Morgan Rodman at 202-536-6821 or [anthony\\_rodman@ost.doi.gov](mailto:anthony_rodman@ost.doi.gov).

## Successful 2012 Records Management Conference

The fifth annual records management conference, *Records Management: Protecting the Past to Empower the Future*, was held June 12-14, 2012, at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. Haskell records management students took an active role in the overall success of this conference by serving as classroom assistants to the presenters. This provided excellent hands-on experience for those who may pursue a future career in records management.

Each year's conference is developed and held by the Office of Trust Records (OTR), which is part of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). These conferences promote records management among tribal employees and government personnel. This year's 190 conference attendees included 83 tribal employees; and 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, 15 Bureau of Indian Education, four Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and 13 OST government personnel.

Conference classes were specifically designed by OTR and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) staff members to meet the needs of the federal and tribal attendees. Eighty-two classroom sessions, held over a three day period, covered a wide range of records information management. This conference also offered four historical tours of the Haskell campus, as well as five information-filled tours of the American Indian Records Repository and NARA facilities.

If you have questions about records management or would like technical assistance, please contact the Office of Trust Records at 505-816-1625.

**Did you know? Nineteen graduates from Haskell Indian Nations University have been hired as full-time employees at the American Indian Records Repository since 2006.**





## ONRR and OST Work Together

The Department of the Interior Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) was formed as a result of the reorganization of the Minerals Management Service (MMS). ONRR was given part of the responsibility of that service when MMS was split into the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and ONRR.



ONRR collects revenue for federal and Indian trust lands used in the production of conventional and renewable energy and mineral resources. ONRR manages royalties, rents, bonuses and other revenues generated throughout the leasing process.

Money collected for Indian mineral leases is returned — 100 percent — to respective Indian tribes and individual Indian mineral owners through the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). Oil and gas royalty income is paid to beneficiaries twice a month.

Last year, OST, in consultation with ONRR, redesigned a more user-friendly oil and gas explanation of payment for beneficiaries who receive royalty income from oil and gas. The explanation of payment provides the payor's name and lease number, sales information, unit values, royalty information and adjustments.

If you would like more information about oil and gas distributions or the explanation of payment, contact your local Fiduciary Trust Officer. For a complete list of Fiduciary Trust Officers, visit the OST website: [www.doi.gov/ost/fto](http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto).



## To OHTA's Credit

Employees of the Office of Historical Trust Accounting (OHTA) are part of an interagency workgroup that was tasked with determining a method to calculate amounts to use in settlement negotiations with tribes concerning claims about trust fund accounting and management. Other employees from the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) are also members of that workgroup.

The tribal team, a specialized group in OHTA, created trust account databases on an expedited basis as part of the settlement efforts. For most of the team, supporting the settlement negotiations has been a full time job. The team consists of seven OHTA staff members who have been collecting and compiling trust fund data for years. They produced trust account databases for over 100 tribes, along with documents that explain the databases. These databases span up to 64 years of account activity.

Attorneys from DOJ and DOI's Office of the Solicitor formulated settlement offers after they considered the trust fund data and settlement analyses prepared by OHTA. OHTA staff members attended negotiations to provide tribes with expert explanations of the trust data.

As of April 2012, 41 tribes have negotiated trust fund mismanagement settlements with the government. The combined value of these settlements exceeds \$1 billion. Although some tribes have settled, others continue to negotiate with the government.

These settlements are important not only because of the positive impact the funds will have on economic development in Indian country, but also because the government is making the effort to right its trust relationship with Indian country.

For more information about this and other work of OHTA, please contact Jason Bruno at 202-208-5151 or [jason\\_bruno@ost.doi.gov](mailto:jason_bruno@ost.doi.gov).